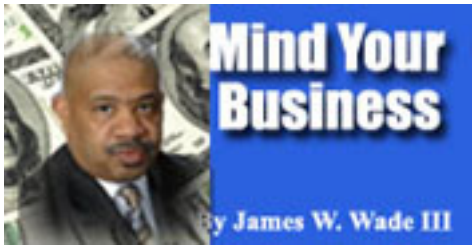

So being a business owner can be a great investment, if you have the ability to take a few dollars and make it make more dollars for you. Make sure you have all the right tools to do the right job.

Do you have a great business mind?

The Cleveland Browns have officially been sold to Jimmy Haslam.

This business deal is something that has a lot people wishing they had a billion dollars to spend, to make more money.

When you can invest $530 million for a team in 1998 and sell it for over a billion dollars, I am sure that's a bonus for your money. Now those are big numbers seeing Art Modell brought the Browns in 1961 for $4 million.

I have memories of the football games and the money they have made off the Wade family. Since 1963, I have attended the Browns games. I remember when you would get a big laugh out of watching the police chase the football through the bleachers after a field goal before they brought the net into play.

True fans will remember the days of Frank Ryan with his high top shoes, Gary Collins being one of our top receivers, Lou "the toe" Groza, and of course the great running back Jim Brown who l ed the
league in rushing
for the 6th time in seven seasons. All played
for coach Blanton Collier. Art Moddell was the owner and we have had two more since then.

As a young boy, I would watch the Browns play and enjoyed the time with my father and buying a football pennant each week. If you were around with me in that era, you would remember Abe Abraham. He was always on the field in a Brown suit catching the football after a touchdown.

I got to see Jim Brown for 3 seasons before he retired in 1966.

Having special moments up-close and personal with the Browns over the years became a special bonus, like when I saw Walter Johnson race Leroy Kelly across the greens at Highland Golf Course or when the players had jobs doing the offseason.

I met Paul Warfield back then.

I often laugh because we use to refer to what is now called the “Dawg Pound” as the HOOD. That’s where all the Blacks sat or could afford to sit. As a child, you enjoyed the taste of the hot dogs and felt like the stadium was the only place that had hot dogs like those.

The business of selling those hot dogs and program books seem to be a very good money making venture when it was affordable to get a cup of hot chocolate and hot dog for under $3.

As a young kid, I couldn’t wait for my father to give me the nod. He would get off the organ and leave out the back door. I would meet him at the car. I would laugh because, when we got in the car, you could always see him counting his money.

I knew then I was going to be able to spend some at the Cleveland Stadium.

I remember the excitement in the opening year of 1999 when the Browns returned home due to Al Lerner purchasing the Browns in 1998 and when his son Randy Lerner became the owner when his father passed.

Since then, I have enjoyed every season… sitting with my father in the stands… getting mad… and saying this is my last year, laughing. I wanted to be like my father when I was a child because he seemed to have everything I wanted.

Now, I did not have the advantage of a Randy Lerner or Jimmy Haslam to have fathers who were rich to pass it down to me but, nevertheless, I am proud of him and everything he did in the business world.

The old saying “it takes money to make money” has not always been true.

Many businessmen have stories of growing up in the projects with nothing and working hard to accomplish great, legal money making ideas.

While living in Atlanta, I would go to the Varsity to eat often. Now, this place that many call a greasy spoon, to me, had to be one the best business ideas a person could have pursued. On any day or evening you can go there and it is always crowded.

Being one of the biggest drive-in places, Varsity sits on two acres and is close to Georgia Tech. I’m sure that has to be a big help. I have no actual number but I am positive that well over 20,000 pass through this place when there’s a game at the college.

So, that’s what I mean about making a great investment. See what just $2,000 dollars did for him? If you ever go to Atlanta, you must just visit it to see how busy a place can be that sells what many call junk food.

I spent many days there enjoying the chili cheese dogs after work. These days, $2,000 dollars can’t get you a great business, but you have to know how many other factors come into play when you want to be a businessman.

Remember if you want to start up a business, you must research the business and make sure you know your competition. It is clear that you must have a business mind, even if you're a painter or landscaper. You must make sure you know how to sell your business.

There's a big difference in painting your Aunt Lula Belle porch versus painting a place where skill and multiple colors are involved. Having those skills makes the difference of your business being big or just you with a paint brush and a ladder.

So being a business owner can be a great investment, if you have the ability to take a few dollars and make it make more dollars for you. Make sure you have all the right tools to do the right job.

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Readers can write to James W. Wade III at The Call & Post, 11800 Shaker Blvd. Cleveland, Ohio 44120 or email jwade@call-post.com . Comments and questions are welcome but, because of the volume of mail, personal responses are not always possible. Please note that comments or questions may be used in a future column.